

FACT SHEET | Cleaner, Safer, Healthier Communities

An Opportunity Agenda for a Better Minnesota

Minnesotans work hard and play by the rules. In return, they expect a nation-leading quality of life, including clean, safe, healthy communities to live and raise their families in, and great recreational opportunities to enjoy all that Minnesota has to offer. Governor Dayton's Opportunity Agenda would deliver on that commitment, by making health reforms that provide consumers with more choices, encouraging competition, and holding insurance companies accountable. It also would fix our failing water systems so that every Minnesotan has clean, affordable water, as well as protect the safety and security of all Minnesotans.

Cleaner Communities

Careful management of Minnesota's pristine environment has generated sustainable economic development and new opportunities for Minnesotans across the state. Governor Dayton has proposed investments to protect and improve air and water quality and ensure future generations benefit from Minnesota's natural treasures.

- **Clean, Affordable Water** – In the Land of 10,000 Lakes, all Minnesotans expect to have water that is clean and affordable, everywhere in Minnesota. More than 40 percent of Minnesota's waters are currently listed as impaired or polluted, while aquatic invasive species have infested more than 550 lakes statewide. That is why the Dayton Opportunity Agenda includes critical investments to help communities improve their aging water infrastructure and begin restoring water quality across Minnesota.
- **Clean Energy for the Future** – Minnesota needs clean, affordable, and reliable energy to power an economy that works for everyone, everywhere across the state. Over the past two decades, Minnesota has made tremendous gains – increasing renewable energy usage from 5.8 percent to 20 percent. The Dayton Opportunity Agenda includes \$1.3 million to assist school districts, colleges and universities, local governments, and state agencies to measure and reduce energy usage. Increased efficiency in public buildings will reduce energy use in future years, saving taxpayer money. Governor Dayton's Opportunity Agenda also would raise the Energy Efficiency Resource Standard to two percent for electric utilities, and maintain the one percent standard for natural gas utilities.
- **Cleaning Up Past Pollution** – Approximately 78 percent of new Superfund sites in Minnesota since 2010 are the result of vapor intrusion problems from industrial chemicals endangering groundwater. In addition, vapor intrusion from approximately 750 closed underground storage tanks may still emit cancer causing chemicals through cracks in basement foundations or sump and drain tile systems. Governor Dayton has proposed a \$2 million investment to identify and clean-up contamination and prevent leaking underground storage tanks left behind by industrial users from endangering property.

Safer Communities

Minnesotans expect safe, thriving communities to live in and raise their families. The Dayton Opportunity Agenda would make investments in the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) and Department of Corrections (DOC) to alleviate crime, reduce recidivism, and partner with communities to enhance public safety.

- **World-Class Training for Law Enforcement** – Law enforcement officers are regularly asked to make life and death decisions in a matter of moments. Governor Dayton's Opportunity Agenda includes \$10 million to ensure that local law enforcement officers receive world-class training, while strengthening relationships with members of the communities they serve.
- **Additional Agents in the Field** – The BCA plays a critical role in the investigation of complex narcotics and homicide cases by providing technical assistance and support to local law enforcement agencies. Governor Dayton has proposed a \$2.5 million investment to help the BCA hire nine additional agents, which would enhance the agency's ability to support local police and sheriff's departments. The Governor also has proposed funding to hire two forensic scientists to examine crime scenes, which would decrease turnaround time for investigations.

- **Improving Correctional Security** – The Department of Corrections is charged with holding approximately 10,000 individuals convicted of crimes accountable for their actions. However, aging facilities and a wave of expected employee retirements threaten to undermine the agency’s work. The Dayton Administration has proposed a \$6 million investment to hire security staff and install upgraded security cameras, lighting, and other infrastructure at state correctional facilities. These investments will protect staff and incarcerated individuals, and keep Minnesota communities safe.
- **Preparing Offenders for Successful Re-Entry** – Since most offenders will eventually be released from prison, the Department of Corrections is committed to rehabilitating individuals for successful re-entry into society. To support this work, Governor Dayton’s budget would invest in prison mental health services and strategies to reduce the use of restrictive housing, which can otherwise leave offenders in isolation for long periods of time. The Governor’s budget also would provide additional resources for probation officers to increase the support they provide to individuals transitioning into the community.

Healthier Communities

Minnesota is consistently recognized as one of the healthiest states in the country. However, there are significant disparities across Minnesota’s communities when it comes to access to health care and opportunities to live full, healthy lives. Governor Dayton’s Opportunity Agenda would invest in strategies to improve public health outcomes for families and better support vulnerable Minnesotans who need assistance.

- **Making Health Care More Affordable** – Since 2014, more than 250,000 Minnesotans have gained access to health insurance. Now, Minnesota’s uninsured rate is the second-lowest in the nation, with over 96 percent of Minnesotans covered. But steep premium increases and high deductibles have placed a big financial burden on far too many Minnesotans. Governor Dayton’s Opportunity Agenda would provide hardworking Minnesotans with more health care choices, encourage competition, and hold insurance companies accountable.
- **Making Child Care More Affordable** – Minnesota’s Child Care Assistance Program provides financial assistance to help low-income working families pay for child care. This funding makes a profound difference for parents and their children – allowing parents to pursue education or work, while helping Minnesota kids access high-quality child care. Governor Dayton’s Opportunity Agenda includes \$85 million to increase provider payment rates and remove red tape for families and providers. These investments would result in more stable assistance for families and increase the number of child care providers who participate in the program, improving care for more than 30,000 children from low-income families, especially in Greater Minnesota.
- **Expanding Minnesota’s Family Home Visiting** – Minnesota teenagers gave birth to 2,406 babies in 2015. These new parents often lack family support, high school diplomas, and parenting skills. To help teen parents and their newborns get off to a strong start, the Governor’s budget includes a \$31 million investment in the Department of Health’s highly effective Home Visiting Program, which helps young parents of at-risk children develop the skills they need to care for their children. Economists have found that home visiting programs can return \$5.70 for every \$1.00 invested by increasing graduation rates, decreasing incarceration rates, improving school readiness, and supporting child health. The proposal also will improve access to evidence-based home visiting for all high-risk mothers by increasing Medical Assistance payments for these services.
- **Homework Starts with Home** – Approximately 167,000 Minnesota households with children face housing instability. Research shows that homeless and mobile children are more likely to be absent from school, perform worse on math and reading tests, and eventually drop out. Through the Homework Starts with Home program, Governor Dayton’s Opportunity Agenda includes \$6 million to provide rental assistance to Minnesota families with children to ensure that students have stable housing throughout the school year. The Governor also has proposed a \$2 million investment to reduce homelessness for families with children.
- **Fighting the Opioid Epidemic** – Opioid abuse affects people regardless of their background or zip code. Opioid deaths have increased 430 percent in Minnesota since 2000. Eighty percent of Americans addicted to heroin started out taking prescription pain medications. The Governor’s Opportunity Agenda includes funding to improve statewide tracking of overdoses in Minnesota so law enforcement and health officials

can respond more quickly and effectively. Governor Dayton also has proposed a \$4 million investment for Minnesota's Tribal Nations and urban American Indian communities to fund prevention programs to reduce opioid abuse.

- **Minnesota Security Hospital** – The Minnesota Security Hospital in St. Peter provides critical care for some of Minnesota's most vulnerable individuals. The hospital is facing staffing shortages and increasingly challenging patients. The Dayton Opportunity Agenda would invest \$25 million hire additional clinical and security staff, and improve staff recruitment, retention, and training. These improvements will help ensure that patients are cared for in a therapeutic environment and that staff are safe in their workplace.